(b) and (c) During November 2002 the 5th meeting of Indo-French High Committee on Defence Cooperation was held in Paris. The Indian delegation was led by the Defence Secretary. The two sides discussed matters regarding bilateral defence co-operation.

It would not be in the interest of national security to give details of Defence co-operation that India seeks from France.

Production of Light Combat Aircraft and its components

2844. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether successful testing of prototypes of Indigenously built Light Combat Aircraft reached production stage;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Praga Tools Ltd. at Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh is having technicians and suitable technical equipment to manufacture any component/parts pertaining to Light Combat Aircraft;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if so, the reasons for the Defence Ministry in not making use of Praga Tools Ltd. for the production of component/parts of Light Combat Aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme is in advanced stage of development and fligt testing on two technology demonstrators. Sanction has been accorded for building 5 prototypes of LCA for accelerating flight testing to reach the production stage.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. M/s. Praga Tools Ltd. have technical infrastructure to undertake aircraft-related machining work. They have been entrusted with machining work related to aircraft structural parts, tooling and line replaceable units of LCA during full-scale engineering development phase.

(f) M/s. Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) is the designated agency for LCA production. Production requirement would be sub-contracted by HAL to the identified vendors.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.